

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6880

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Health & Long-Term Care, February 2, 2006

**Title:** An act relating to a commission on psychoactive substance control.

**Brief Description:** Creating a commission on psychoactive substance control.

**Sponsors:** Senators Kline, Weinstein and McCaslin.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 2/2/06 [DP-WM, w/oRec].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

**Majority Report:** Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Thibaudeau, Vice Chair; Franklin, Kastama, Kline and Poulsen.

**Minority Report:** That it be referred without recommendation.

Signed by Senators Benson, Brandland, Johnson and Parlette.

**Staff:** Sharon Swanson (786-7447)

**Background:** The World Health Organization defines substance abuse as a chronic and relapsing behavioral disorder, caused by repeated and often prolonged and/or heavy use of psychoactive substances.

A psychoactive substance is defined as a chemical substance that alters brain function, resulting in temporary changes in perception, mood, consciousness, or behavior. Psychoactive substances include alcohol, tobacco, cocaine, amphetamines, heroin, opium, codeine, and caffeine.

In 2002, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimated that approximately 185 million people use at least one type of illegal substance or another on at least a monthly basis.

**Summary of Bill:** A sixteen member commission is created to investigate and make recommendations for alternative regulatory approaches to the production, distribution, and control of psychoactive substances.

The commission will focus on the following objectives: reducing crime; enhancing public health; protecting children; and promoting efficient use of scarce public resources.

Four commission members will come from the Legislature, the remaining twelve are appointed by the Governor. Commission members shall have expertise in issue areas enumerated within the bill but including: mental health and substance abuse; law enforcement; public health; and education.

The commission is required to report its recommendations to the Legislature by December 1, 2007.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** Yes.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Testimony For:** The United States spends between \$200 - \$300 million per year on the war on drugs. Drugs are everywhere, so clearly this war is not one we are winning. Drug abuse is a disease. The people who suffer from addiction and abuse are not going to find a cure sitting in jail. Many of the people who are abusing drugs and alcohol are self-medicating an underlying mental illness. This is a medical and societal problem.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Charles Heaney, King County Medical Society; Roger Goodman, King County Bar Association; Richard Chapin.